

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 08843 140446Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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P R 131435Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9718
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
USCINCEUR

CONFIDENTIAL NAIROBI 8843

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, KE
SUBJECT: REPORTED MEETING BETWEEN KENYATTA AND OGINGA ODINGA
REF: (A) NAIROBI 7216, (B) NAIROBI 2829

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY OFFICER HAS BEEN TOLD BY TWO LUO M.P.'S THAT PRESIDENT KENYATTA MET SECRETLY LAST WEEK WITH EX-VICE PRESIDENT JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA. IF TRUE, SUCH A MEETING WOULD SUGGEST THAT ODINGA'S PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL REHABILITATION AND A ROLE IN SUCCESSION POLITICS HAVE IMPROVED. END SUMMARY.

2. TWO LUO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (MIDIKA AND ARINGO) TOLD EMBOFF IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS JULY 12 THAT EX-VICE PRESIDENT OGINGA ODINGA MET SECRETLY WITH PRESIDENT KENYATTA IN NAKURU LAST WEEK. MEETING,
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M.P.'S SAID, WAS ARRANGED BY MINISTER OF STATE KOINANGE AND TOOK PLACE AT NIGHT. M.P.'S DID NOT CLAIM TO KNOW WHAT WAS DISCUSSED APART FROM BROAD QUESTION OF KENYA'S FUTURE. MIDIKA, HOWEVER, ASSERTED THAT KENYATTA HAS NOW PROMISED TO PERMIT ODINGA'S REENTRY INTO POLITICS. THIS WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY CREATING ANOTHER PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

IN ODINGA'S DISTRICT AND BY PERMITTING ODINGA TO STAND FOR IT. MIDIKA ALSO STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT LATER THIS YEAR AND CALLING EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THIS, HE SAID, WOULD GIVE KENYATTA IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO RESTRUCTURE CABINET AND LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT.

3. IRONICALLY, STANDARD JULY 12 CARRIED FRONT PAGE SQUIB REPORTING THAT CROWD OF MOURNERS, INCLUDING ODINGA, WAS DISPERSED AT FUNERAL OF NYANZA PROVINCE ON JULY 10, AND ODINGA WAS PREVENTED FROM MAKING SPEECH. ARINGO, WHO WAS WITH ODINGA AT TIME, ATTRIBUTED APPARENT CONTRADICTION IN TREATMENT OF ODINGA TO FACT THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS IN NYANZA HAD NOT BEEN QUOTE CLUED IN UNQUOTE. HE SAID ODINGA WOULD MAKE A SECOND TRY AT ANOTHER FUNERAL IN NYANZA ON JULY 17.

4. REPORTED MEETING BETWEEN KENYATTA AND ODINGA IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. KENYATTA HAD NOT MET WITH ODINGA SINCE BEFORE MARCH 1966 KANU CONFERENCE WHEN ODINGA RESIGNED NATION'S VICE PRESIDENCY. QUESTION OF ODINGA'S POLITICAL REHABILITATION HAS ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION HERE OVER PAST SIX MONTHS. IT BEARS IMPORTANTLY ON THE SUCCESSION AND ON PROSPECTS

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FOR A REINVIGORATED KIKUYU-LUO ALLIANCE. UNTIL NOW IT APPEARED THAT VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO HAD BEEN ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL IN BLOCKING EFFORTS TO REFLOAT ODINGA, WHOM THEY VIEW AS A POLITICAL THREAT. THE MEETING WITH KENYATTA SUGGESTS THIS MAY NO LONGER BE TRUE.

5. SINCE LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION OF KANU ELECTIONS, WHICH HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 3, THERE HAS BEEN NO PREVIOUS INDICATION THAT KENYATTA HAD AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN TO ENHANCE PROSPECTS FOR STABLE TRANSITION. KANU ELECTION REMAIN ON BACK BURNER. OVER PAST FEW WEEKS SEVERAL MAJOR POLITICAL PERSONALITIES, INCLUDING MUNGAI AND FINANCE MINISTER KIBAKI, HAVE INTIMATED THAT NO PRESENT PLANS EXIST TO RESCHEDULE ELECTIONS. ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO TOLD DCM JULY 8 THAT HE NOW BELIEVED FOR FIRST TIME THAT KANU ELECTIONS ARE OFF. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT KENYATTA IS ADOPTING AN APRES-MOI-LE-DELUGE ATTITUDE TOWARD THESE KANU ELECTIONS AND THE SUCCESSION IN GENERAL, BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT IN HIS OWN HIGHLY PERSONALIZED AND IN-SCRUTABLE FASHION HE IS DEVISING A NEW APPROACH TO

THE PROBLEM. A MEETING WITH ODINGA WOULD MAKE SENSE
IN THIS CONTEXT.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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